

66-4896

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

CONFIDENTIAL

November 8, 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. ROSTOW

SUBJECT: Conversation with [REDACTED]

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1. I talked with [REDACTED] for almost two hours yesterday, mostly in Chinese. His Mandarin is better than reported and his English, which he is now studying full time, has improved remarkably. Conversation with him is more worthwhile than his former rank would indicate because of his high intelligence, his perceptivity, his evident intellectual honesty, and his retentive memory.

2. [REDACTED] emphasized that Communist China must be contained as in Vietnam. He further said we should never "give up" Taiwan to the Communists in any attempt to buy good relations. It was true that Taiwan was the major stumbling block to relations, but by no means the only one. The Chinese needed, for both ideological and practical domestic reasons, to throw us into the role of "bad people." Giving up Taiwan would be interpreted by the Chinese as weakness and nothing else. (I assured him there was no thought of this.)

3. [REDACTED] thought we should keep two considerations constantly in mind in trying to interpret Chicom policies: (1) the Chinese thirst for equality among the world powers, and (2) Chinese preoccupation with domestic considerations. He thought we sometimes interpreted Chinese actions in an international context at times when they were fashioned almost entirely from domestic concerns, which we were not likely to affect very much in any event.

4. Nevertheless, [REDACTED] thought that our bridge-building efforts were right; the Chinese must be given an option if they are to alter their pathological hostility to the United States. Since the Chinese only understand reciprocity, however, we should not push too far without response. It was good to try to arrange an exchange of people and ideas, although the Chinese would not reciprocate until the post-Mao era. He doubted that trade offers would affect the political situation at all. We should proceed with steps concerning trade which are in our own economic long-term interest, quite apart from political considerations. The Chinese would understand this because that is just what they themselves are doing, despite advertisement to the contrary.

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5. [ ] thought that entry into the United Nations would not alter Chinese policies for the foreseeable future. Domestic change must come first. China is very sick but it is not likely to be cured from the outside.

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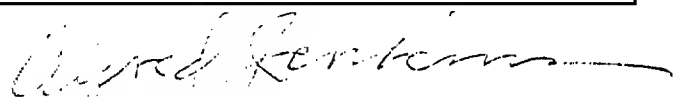
6. After Mao, [ ] thought China would be able gradually to improve its relations with both the Soviets and us. A clear choice between the two would not have to be made because there was not that much difference between the Soviet revisionists and the American capitalists. Among the major nations today, in social organization China was in one camp and all the rest in comparison could pretty well be lumped in the other, so great was their difference from China. [ ] [ ]

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7. [ ] thinks most Chinese believe most of what the regime tells them concerning international affairs. Mainland Chinese who have radios not only fear to listen to foreign broadcasts but actually have little desire to, since they are unable to relate to the world which those broadcasts describe and have no hope of joining that world. Hence the broadcasts fill no realistic or felt need except for the rare individual. He listened to foreign broadcasts mostly for Arabic language practice. [ ]

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Alfred Jenkins

cc: Mr. Davis  
Mr. Jessup  
Mr. Jorden  
Mr. Redmon  
Mr. Ropa  
State EA/ACA - for China Working Group

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Remarks:

Walt Rostow gave me this memorandum to-day. He thought it was most interesting. I pass it to you for whatever it may be worth.

*Wt*

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 Richard Helms, Director 11/11/66

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